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*Course of Study in the Eight Grades.* By C. A. McMURRY. New York: The Macmillan Co. 2 vols. Vol. I, pp. vi+236; Vol. II, pp. 226.

In these two very valuable volumes Dr. McMurry has incorporated the fruits of many years of painstaking, scholarly investigation of the means of betterment of the work of the grades antecedent to the high-school course. Since more than 90 per cent. of all children never secure any school education beyond that offered by the grades, it is of paramount importance that the richest possible opportunities for intellectual and spiritual development be afforded during that stage. There is in progress a tremendous struggle among the utilitarians who demand that the rudiments of business accessories be dominant, the disciplinarians who ask that the best grindstones for wit-sharpening be selected, and the advocates of enrichment who maintain that the child must sample the whole world. In view of the pedagogical chaos respecting desirable content and arrangement, it is fortunate to have a man of scientific training and large insight devote many of the best years of his life to this problem.

The average superintendent, in making out a new course of study, copies blindly the course in some place with a larger reputation. In this way little scientific thought is bestowed upon this important problem, and pedagogical blunders are endlessly perpetrated. In these two books Dr. McMurry turns on the light of pedagogical science, and attempts to study, first, the aims of this stage of education; second, the educative value of various subjects, and the adjustment of means to ends.

In Vol. I the first four chapters are respectively: "Enrichment of the Course," "The Present Problem in the Course of Study," "Economy of Simple Aims," and "Simplification and Organization of the School Course." These titles are all thoroughly indicative of the contents of the chapters. Dr. McMurry shows conclusively that "the leaven of great changes has been at work in the whole social fabric, and has made itself felt also in the school programs. . . . Through the medium of the school the great human world outside, with its institutions and social ideas, is trying to impress itself upon the child. . . . Our present course of study, then, is due to large world-influences, over which the schoolmaster has had no control.

The second volume has four chapters devoted to the discussion of foundation principles rather than to details of the course of study. These chapters are: "The Moral Aim in the Course of Study," "The Problems of Modifying the School Machinery to Meet Modern Needs," "The Teacher *versus* the Course of Study," and "Flexibility and Adaptability of the Course of Study." These chapters belong with the first four chapters of Vol. I, and taken together they form a very illuminating discussion. From a pedagogical point of view it is not quite clear why the general chapters in Vol. II are not incorporated with the related ones in Vol. I. The discussions are not specially related to any particular grade or branch of study.

The remainder of the books are given over to a consideration of the various grade branches, including reading, language, history, geography, elementary science, arithmetic, and the manual arts. The elementary sciences include elementary notions of physics, botany, zoölogy, chemistry, and physiology. Under manual arts are considered sewing, weaving, book-making, furniture-making, tin- and copper-smithing, house-building, cookery, pottery-making, and the construction of apparatus. Besides, a very carefully wrought outline of work for each of the subjects in each of the grades, there are given many suggestions concerning the point of view from which the subject should be taught, and means of attaining these ends. Experiments are suggested, excursions planned, textbooks indicated, and very excellent lists of supplementary

books for pupils and reference lists for teachers are given. These outlines and discussions are much more than would be found in a course of study as usually given in any superintendent's report.

These books should be on the table of every grade teacher, and every superintendent should have them constantly at hand for reference. They would form a very valuable nucleus for discussions at teachers' meetings, and, if worked over for a year or two with the teachers, would certainly contribute much to the unity of work in any school system. They would also serve admirably as textbooks for a part of the work in school organization and school supervision.

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*Elements of Practical Pedagogy.* By the BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS. New York: LaSalle Bureau of Supplies, 1905. Pp. xx + 304.

All students of pedagogy will welcome the appearance of this little volume. It is not the work of a single author, nor does it deal with abstract theories. Its aim is eminently practical. It is a body of rules for the conduct of elementary schools, rather than a discussion or a justification of principles; or perhaps we might better say that it is a concise and detailed statement of the methods employed by the army of teachers that constitutes the membership of this society.

It should be remembered that to this community belongs the credit of establishing the first normal schools for the professional training of teachers in elementary schools, and that to them we also owe the grade system. They incorporated into their normal schools primary schools for practice-teaching, where the students received a thorough drill in conducting the simultaneous or class method of recitation. In these three respects, which are now universally recognized as among the most essential features of a good school system, the Christian Brothers were a long time in advance of any other body of teachers in the western world.

At a time like the present, when the cry is going up everywhere against the effeminization of our elementary schools, and when serious-minded people in all parts of the country are endeavoring to find some means of introducing the teaching of religion and morality into the public schools, no educator can fail to be interested in the methods which have been so successfully employed by this splendid organization of men teachers, the results of whose work during the last two centuries have led to the establishment of their schools in almost every country of Christendom. *The Conduct of Schools*, published in 1720, has rendered the idea and methods of St. Jean Baptiste de la Salle and his disciples more or less familiar to all students of education.

The present little volume of three hundred pages is far from doing justice to the important contributions to pedagogy made by the Christian Brothers. It gives the impression of being a synopsis of a pedagogical library rather than a treatise on any one of the familiar themes that are occupying educators at present. The wide range of subjects touched upon renders the treatment almost catechetical in brevity, and leaves no room for the development of any one theme or for the discussion of educational principles. This may have its advantages for members of the order, but it is likely to lead to many misunderstandings on the part of those who are unfamiliar with the spirit and the work of the Brothers of the Christian Schools.

The minute details that are entered into in this body of rules are likely to impress the casual reader unfavorably; they seem to render the teachers mere automata, without